

1 14-21 - INFORMATION & SCOPING MEETING - LITTLEFORK

2 JULY 17, 2014 - 11:00 A.M.

3 FOR THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION,

4 MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE,

5 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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8 In the Matter of the Application of Minnesota Power for a
9 Route Permit for the Great Northern High-Voltage
10 Transmission Line Project from Manitoba, Canada -
Minnesota Border to the Blackberry Substation near Grand
Rapids, Minnesota

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PUC DOCKET NO. E-015/TL-14-21

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16 Littlefork Community Center
220 Main Street
17 Littlefork, Minnesota

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19 July 17, 2014

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COURT REPORTER: Janet Shaddix Elling, RPR

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1 MS. TRACY SMETANA: Good morning,
2 everyone, and thank you for coming.

3 My name is Tracy Smetana, I'm the public
4 advisor with the Minnesota Public Utilities
5 Commission.

6 As you can see on the screen and you
7 received in the notice or read in the newspaper,
8 we're here for a public information and scoping
9 meeting for the Great Northern Transmission Line
10 Project.

11 On this opening slide I've also included
12 the Public Utilities Commission's docket number.
13 That's sort of the key to finding anything with the
14 Commission, is that docket number. So you'll see me
15 refer to that quite frequently as we go through the
16 presentation.

17 Briefly, the agenda. First we're going
18 to talk about the route permit roles and process.
19 I'll be doing some of that and we also have Julie
20 Smith here from the U.S. Department of Energy to
21 talk about their role. We'll ask Minnesota Power to
22 provide us with a brief summary of the project. And
23 then the environmental review portion will be
24 handled by the Department of Commerce and, again,
25 the Department of Energy. And then finally the main

1 event, which is your comments and questions.

2 So, first off, I'd like to start with who
3 is the Public Utilities Commission anyway. Because
4 I'm guessing for a lot of folks you haven't
5 interacted with us in the past. I know until I
6 applied for a job with the Public Utilities
7 Commission I didn't know such a thing existed. So I
8 always like to give you a little bit of background
9 on who we are and what we do.

10 We regulate permitting for power plants,
11 transmission lines, pipelines, other energy
12 facilities. We deal with local and in-state
13 long-distance telephone companies. We also deal
14 with investor-owned electric and natural gas
15 utilities, their rates and services.

16 We have five commissioners appointed by
17 the governor and they serve staggered terms, so it's
18 not like some of the other state agencies where when
19 we get a new governor we get a whole new batch of
20 commissioners, ours are serving staggered terms so
21 they don't all come in and go out at the same time.
22 They are also full-time employees at the Commission.
23 So quite different from, say, a county commissioner
24 or small-town city council person where they come to
25 a couple meetings a month and that's the extent of

1 their responsibilities, this is full-time employment
2 for our commissioners. And then we have about 50
3 staff, so we're a pretty small agency.

4 A little more on who's who in this
5 process. If you follow this process from start to
6 finish there will be a variety of folks that you
7 might interact with. First off is the applicant.
8 That's the term we use to describe the company
9 asking for the route permit, so in this case that's
10 Minnesota Power. We also have the Department of
11 Commerce, another state agency, the Energy
12 Environmental Review and Analysis Group. Most of
13 you met Bill on the way in and that's his
14 department. They're a state agency and they will
15 conduct the environmental review for this project.

16 Later on in the process we will have the
17 Office of Administrative Hearings get involved.
18 They're another state agency. And we'll have an
19 administrative law judge, you might see that
20 abbreviated as ALJ, hold hearings, both public
21 hearings back up in this area when we get further
22 along in the process, and they will also hold what
23 we call an evidentiary hearing, where it's sort of
24 like a court situation. Open to the public, but
25 typically it's the lawyers in the room that attend

1 that. And ultimately what the judge is going to do
2 is collect all the information and all the evidence
3 in this record and write a report that includes some
4 recommendations for the Public Utilities Commission.
5 So the judge's job is sort of fact-finding.

6 We also have the Department of Energy.
7 As I mentioned, Julie Smith is here, she's with the
8 Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy
9 Reliability, kind of a mouthful. And their job is
10 to lead the environmental, historic and cultural
11 resource reviews in consultation when there's a
12 presidential permit application.

13 And as I mentioned, the Public Utilities
14 Commission, there's a couple folks from our staff
15 that you might interact with throughout this
16 process. The first is our energy facilities
17 planner. Their job is to assist in building the
18 record kind of on the technical side, inform
19 commissioners of impacts of various alternatives
20 that are out there. Neutral person. The
21 Commission, our role is to be neutral. We don't
22 advocate for one side or the other, we're not for
23 the company, we're not for the citizens, we're not
24 for a group of landowners, we're not for any
25 particular interests. Our job is to be neutral and

1 review the facts and make decisions accordingly.

2 We also have the public advisor, as I
3 mentioned, that's me. My job is to work with folks
4 and help you figure out, how does this process work,
5 where can I plug in, when should I plug in, what
6 kind of information are you looking for at this
7 stage in the process. My job is not to give legal
8 advice, my job is not to advocate for one position
9 or another, it's simply to provide the facts and
10 help you along.

11 So why is the Public Utilities Commission
12 involved in this particular project? Well, in this
13 case the law says this is a high-voltage
14 transmission line because of its capacity and its
15 length, as listed here. And so if it meets those
16 criteria, then the state says, hey, you need a route
17 permit from the Minnesota Public Utilities
18 Commission. And I've referred to the statutes and
19 rules that describe this in more detail, if you're
20 looking for some really good bedtime reading you can
21 look that up.

22 Now, the other piece of this puzzle is
23 the certificate of need. And that answers the
24 question is the project needed. In this particular
25 case, the company does also need a certificate of

1 need from the Commission before they can build this
2 project. And this is being handled in a separate
3 process. Some of you may have remembered or may
4 have been at some meetings that we held back in
5 February, and that was regarding the certificate of
6 need question, answering that question is the
7 project needed. So we're not going to focus on that
8 today.

9 Our focus today is the route permit, the
10 other side of the question, if it's needed, where is
11 it going to go. But, again, I just wanted to
12 provide some information on the certificate of need
13 so you know there's another piece to this process.

14 So how in the world does the Commission
15 decide if it's needed where is it going to go? So
16 the statutes and rules give us some guidance on the
17 factors that the Commission needs to look at and
18 consider. What it doesn't do is rank them. And so
19 that's what the debate is going to be about
20 throughout this process. Some people are going to
21 say, well, you know, human settlement is clearly the
22 most important thing, avoid that no matter what.
23 Some people might say, well, the economy is a really
24 big deal, avoid agriculture, forestry, mining, you
25 know, avoid those at all costs. And so that's what

1 the debate will be about throughout this project.
2 These are just some of the items that the Commission
3 is required to consider as part of the process.

4 And, again, some more of those factors.
5 Allow for future expansion, use of existing
6 rights-of-way when that makes sense or is possible.
7 Using natural boundaries when they make sense.
8 Reliability of the electrical system, you know, we
9 all want to make sure when we flip that switch the
10 lights go on, and so we want to consider that as
11 part of the process. And also the cost.

12 So some other terms that you might hear
13 in terms of the route permit. So when we get to the
14 end of this process, if the Commission does indeed
15 grant a route permit for this project, some of the
16 terms you'll see are these.

17 First is the permitted route. And that's
18 just sort of the location from point A to point B of
19 where the thing is going to go. And the route width
20 is going to vary quite a bit along that route. It
21 could be up to one and a quarter miles that they're
22 permitted. And so you might say, well, what in the
23 world, they don't need that much space to build
24 this, why are we looking at one and a quarter miles?
25 And the reason that that flexibility is allowed is

1 so the company can work with landowners and be
2 flexible. Or when they get out in the field and
3 they find an obstacle that they just didn't know
4 about until they were standing right there, they
5 have the flexibility to try and avoid that and work
6 around it.

7 Now, as we go down this page we're going
8 to get narrower and narrower. So you can see the
9 next one is right-of-way and that's the actual
10 amount of land that's needed within that route, so
11 we've got the big route and we get down to the
12 right-of-way, the actual amount that they need to
13 construct, to maintain, and operate that line.

14 And then we get narrower still into that
15 anticipated alignment. And that's the spot where
16 the company thinks the line is actually going to be
17 built.

18 I know some of you grabbed a handout on
19 the way in that was a fact sheet about rights-of-way
20 and easements. This is a little snippet of the
21 information that you'll find in that handout. I
22 would definitely recommend that if you have
23 questions or concerns. As I mentioned earlier on, I
24 don't give legal advice and I'm not an advocate, so
25 I'm just here to kind of give you an introduction to

1 these terms and these topics and where you can find
2 more information.

3 So first off is the easement. That would
4 be the negotiation between the company and the
5 landowner in terms of where this line might go on
6 your property.

7 In this particular case, Minnesota
8 statutes do allow the company to use the power of
9 eminent domain to take land if you can't come to an
10 agreement. And in that case it would move into the
11 courts to make that decision on how that process is
12 handled, in terms of instead of being just
13 negotiated between the company and the landowner.

14 In this case there's also some option for
15 what you may have heard of as Buy the Farm. There's
16 a law that says in some cases the landowner can
17 require the applicant or the company to purchase the
18 property. And there's some specific circumstances
19 where that fits. And, again, I'm not an attorney,
20 I'm not giving legal advice, I just want to point
21 out that these things exist out there and there's
22 some places where you can get more information if
23 you have questions along those lines.

24 So this is sort of a high level overview
25 of what the process looks like. And you can see the

1 second box on here, public information and scoping,
2 that's where we are today. So you can see we're
3 pretty early on in the process. This first box that
4 says application accepted, that just means the
5 company provided all the information we need to
6 start our review process. It doesn't mean we think
7 it's a great idea and we're going to say, yep, go
8 ahead and build this thing. All it says is all the
9 information is there to move to the next step. So I
10 know that term accepted is a little deceiving.

11 From there we're going to move over into
12 the Department of Commerce's area of expertise so
13 I'll let Bill talk about that in his presentation,
14 how that environmental impact statement process
15 works.

16 And then once the draft environmental
17 impact statement is published, we move into the
18 public hearings. And that's when that judge will
19 come out back into the area of where the proposed
20 route is going to be to get some feedback from folks
21 on where things are at on the project. The judge
22 will hold evidentiary hearings and, again,
23 ultimately write that report and we get down to the
24 decision point. And I know that it's cut off on the
25 bottom a little bit there, but if you have the

1 handout in front of you, you can see the process
2 takes, from accepted to decision, roughly 15 to 18
3 months. So you can see we're very early on and we
4 have a ways to go and it's a lengthy process.

5 If you like a list better than a picture,
6 this gives essentially the same information but
7 includes the timelines so you can kind of see what
8 happens next. And you can see at this point we're
9 projecting a decision in October of 2015. So, like
10 I said, we have a ways to go.

11 So one of the things that we do along the
12 way is we ask questions and we seek your input on
13 various things. That's why we're here today, to get
14 answers to some questions that we have. And I just
15 wanted to give you a sample of a notice that the
16 Commission publishes when we are looking for
17 information. And you can see this is an old one
18 from back in April, but I just wanted to use it to
19 illustrate some points about our notices.

20 So first off you see here's that docket
21 number again, right. That's the key to everything
22 that we do. So if you're communicating with us
23 about the project, including this docket number is
24 extremely helpful.

25 Then you'll also see some dates in there.

1 We have some deadlines because we have to keep the
2 process moving along. So we have some deadlines of
3 when these comments need to be in to our office.

4 And then you'll also see we identify some
5 specific topics. So back in April and May we were
6 wondering, does the application contain the
7 information we need and should we have a task force,
8 okay. So if you send us comments about these
9 questions today, we've already moved on, so it's not
10 really that helpful. And so that's why I'm saying
11 it's really important to look at what are the topics
12 that we're asking about today so that you can answer
13 the questions that we're looking for right now.

14 So you might be thinking, hey, this is
15 really great stuff, how can I learn more, I want to
16 know more about this. Or I'm just jumping in now
17 and I might have missed something before. We do
18 have what we call an eDocket system where everything
19 that happens in this case is filed electronically.
20 And it's out there on the Internet for folks to see
21 if you have an interest in reading that. You can
22 just follow these steps right from our website.
23 And, again, that docket number is the key, and so
24 you can see I've listed the docket numbers for both
25 the route permit, which we're talking about today,

1 and the certificate of need, which is kind of on a
2 separate track but of course is related to this
3 process. So you can see 14 is the year and 21 is
4 the number for the route permit, and 12 is the year
5 and 1163 is the number for the certificate of need.

6 We also have a project mailing list and I
7 know many of you are already on it or you gave me
8 one of these orange cards on the way in. If you
9 want to stay informed on opportunities to
10 participate, whether it be a comment period, future
11 meetings, those types of things, when the
12 environmental document is available, you would
13 definitely want to sign up for this project mailing
14 list. And you can receive information by U.S. mail
15 or by e-mail on this list.

16 Now, if you say, hmm, that project list
17 sounds great, but I want to know everything, I don't
18 want to miss a thing. We do have an e-mail
19 subscription service, where you can go in yourself
20 to our website and say, hey, I want to get
21 everything about this particular docket. It will
22 result in a lot of e-mails, so if you're not a super
23 e-mail fan this probably isn't your deal. And you
24 can also unsubscribe if you say, whoa, whoa, whoa,
25 this is way too much, you can just go back and

1 unsubscribe from it, too. But then you'll get an
2 e-mail every time something new comes in. And often
3 people say, you know, that subscribing thing isn't
4 very user-friendly, so I always like to give you a
5 picture of what that screen looks like, so when you
6 get there you can say, oh, here's what I put in,
7 here's what I put in there, here's what I put in
8 there, to make sure that you know what you're doing.

9 And if you have further questions after
10 today, there are two folks, as I mentioned, with the
11 PUC that can help you with that. The first is me,
12 I'm the public advisor. Again, my name is Tracy.
13 We also have an energy facilities planner and that
14 is Michael Kaluzniak, and he is here today in the
15 back in the green shirt. So if you have questions
16 of a more technical nature, he's certainly happy to
17 stick around and answer those for you.

18 And, with that, I'm going to turn it over
19 to Julie Ann Smith with the Department of Energy.

20 DR. JULIE ANN SMITH: Thank you. I'll
21 get my script here.

22 Good morning, everyone. My name is Julie
23 Ann Smith, I work for the United States Department
24 of Energy and I'm with the Office of Electricity
25 Delivery and Energy Reliability.

1 I want to express my sincere thanks for
2 you all taking time out of your busy schedules to be
3 here with us today and attend this meeting. Your
4 presence and input are vital and important, vitally
5 important to a robust public participation process.

6 This is a scoping meeting, which is all
7 about me, or DOE, listening to you and what you have
8 to say about the Great Northern Transmission Line
9 Project. The Department of Energy needs to hear
10 what issues you think we should consider when we
11 conduct our environmental analysis.

12 The reason we are here is that Minnesota
13 Power is proposing to construct the Great Northern
14 Transmission Line, or Great Northern, as an
15 international transmission line, and has asked the
16 Department of Energy for a permit to cross the
17 U.S./Canadian border. Minnesota Power submitted its
18 presidential permit application to the Department of
19 Energy in April of 2014.

20 Before any electric energy transmission
21 facility can be built across the U.S. international
22 border, the project proponent or applicant must
23 obtain a presidential permit from the U.S. DOE. A
24 Department of Energy presidential permit authorizes
25 the company to construct, operate, maintain, and

1 connect electric transmission facilities at the
2 border.

3 The Department of Energy is involved in
4 this proceeding for one reason only, the proposed
5 transmission line would cross the international
6 border. If this line did not cross the
7 international border, then I wouldn't be here with
8 you today.

9 The Department of Energy has no authority
10 to site this line, only the State of Minnesota,
11 specifically the Minnesota PUC has that authority.
12 The DOE does not convey the right of eminent domain
13 with this permit, nor can the DOE address issues of
14 compensation for land that would be impacted by the
15 proposed Great Northern project.

16 Before the DOE can issue this kind of
17 permit, we must comply with the National
18 Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA. NEPA is the
19 federal law that acts as the nation's basic charter
20 for environmental protection. It requires that all
21 federal agencies consider the potential impacts of
22 their proposed actions. NEPA is based on a set of
23 principles. The first and the most important in
24 what we are engaged in today is full disclosure and
25 public participation in that process. This allows

1 us to understand the project not only from the
2 project proponent's point of view, but also from
3 your point of view.

4 We also are required to explore
5 alternatives to what is being proposed by Minnesota
6 Power, so alternatives to the action that we are
7 considering. One of those alternatives that we
8 consider is a no-action alternative, which means
9 that for our purposes the Department of Energy would
10 not issue the presidential permit.

11 In the alternatives analysis, we have to
12 do this with scientific rigor and with an
13 apples-to-apples kind of comparison approach across
14 all alternatives. We have to consider mitigation or
15 ways to reduce impacts or avoid those impacts
16 altogether. And we have to weigh options and
17 explain decisions.

18 In the end, NEPA promotes better informed
19 agency decision-making and provides you, the public,
20 with the opportunity to learn about the federal
21 agencies' proposed actions and provide timely
22 information and comment to what it is that federal
23 agencies are proposing to do.

24 In terms of process, NEPA has the benefit
25 that it provides one process and is an umbrella

1 statute of sorts. And that it allows agencies and
2 developers to comply with the numerous -- and there
3 are more than this -- environmental, health and
4 safety related laws for which we are responsible for
5 complying with.

6 We analyze potential effects from federal
7 agency actions to numerous resource types that
8 include not only biological resources, soils
9 resources, but also human-related resources such as
10 environmental justice, health and safety, those
11 types of concerns. And this all happens in one
12 document and, again, at equal weight on those
13 resources.

14 For this proposed project the DOE has
15 determined that an appropriate level of analysis
16 under NEPA is to be an environmental impact
17 statement, or EIS. An EIS from the federal
18 perspective essentially tells the story of the
19 proposed project. The Great Northern EIS will
20 analyze the foreseeable environmental impacts that
21 might flow from our granting of a presidential
22 permit. The EIS will also identify steps that might
23 be needed to mitigate environmental impacts.

24 There are other agencies, federal
25 agencies involved in the review of this project.

1 That would include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
2 St. Paul District, as well as the U.S. Fish and
3 Wildlife Service. They have permitting or oversight
4 authority for proposed facilities within their
5 respective jurisdictions. The U.S. Army Corps of
6 Engineers is already a cooperating agency to the
7 Department of Energy on the preparation of this
8 environmental impact statement, so they are being
9 involved as we go along with this analysis.

10 Again, we are here to listen to and get
11 your comments and suggestions for the issues that we
12 should be addressing in the EIS. We also would like
13 to know any alternative routes for proposed
14 projects. And Bill Storm will be speaking to those
15 alternative routes or alternative route segment
16 suggestions.

17 This is an overview of the NEPA process.
18 We are here in the blue circle for scoping. The
19 federal scoping period, as noted in the Federal
20 Register, closes on August 11th. And after that
21 scoping period closes, we will get to work on
22 preparing a draft environmental impact statement.
23 This will take several months for us to do.

24 Once the draft is completed, it will be
25 posted to our website and distributed to anyone on

1 the mailing list. So, again, if you want to be on
2 the mailing list, please make sure you sign up if
3 you're not on it already by filling out one of the
4 yellow cards on the table by the door.

5 When we release the draft environmental
6 impact statement publicly, there will be at least 45
7 days for a comment period for the public, for you to
8 review that draft environmental impact statement and
9 to submit your comments. During the comment period
10 on the draft EIS you'll be able to submit comments
11 in writing or by e-mail and you will also be able to
12 make oral comments, because we, DOE, myself, will be
13 coming back to Minnesota to hold public hearings to
14 receive those oral comments officially on the draft
15 EIS.

16 After the close of the comment period on
17 the draft EIS, we will prepare the final EIS. Every
18 comment that we receive from you or from other
19 agencies will be included in the final EIS and we
20 will respond in the document to every comment that
21 we receive.

22 When the final EIS is completed, it will
23 also be made publicly available. It will be sent to
24 everyone again on the mailing list, it will be
25 available for viewing and downloading on the various

1 websites.

2 The law -- by law, the Department of
3 Energy may not make a final decision on the Great
4 Northern Transmission Line presidential permit
5 application until 30 days after the publication of
6 the EIS. It might be longer than that, but at least
7 we have to wait 30 days before we issue what is
8 called a record of decision, which will state
9 whether or not the Department of Energy will issue
10 the presidential permit.

11 So at the completion of the EIS, the
12 Department of Energy may or may not issue that
13 presidential permit. If the DOE were to issue the
14 presidential permit, the transmission line and
15 associated facilities could not be built unless and
16 until all other state, local, and federal permits
17 are obtained by the company.

18 As you can see in this meeting, we have a
19 stenographer here to write down accurately what your
20 comments are. Whether you choose to speak or not,
21 you're invited to send us your written comments.
22 All comments, whether written or oral, are treated
23 with the same weight and they are treated equally in
24 the analysis.

25 Again, we have a comment period that ends

1 on August 11th. However, if you submit comments
2 after that time we normally do consider those to the
3 extent that we can.

4 If you have any questions about
5 specifics, you know, design details, more specific
6 questions about the project itself, as you can see
7 we've got lots of help from Minnesota Power, as well
8 as some mapping stations to help answer those
9 questions and to give you some pointed feedback on
10 the information that you're seeking.

11 And, again, thank you very much for being
12 here, we really look forward to your input. And I'm
13 now going to turn it over to Dave Moeller from
14 Minnesota Power.

15 Oh, sorry, I would be remiss if I did not
16 mention the -- from the federal EIS website, where
17 everything will be contained, as well as we have the
18 state websites where you can comment and you can
19 find information, this will be the -- this is the
20 address, the link for that website that's sponsored
21 by DOE as well as the Department of Commerce.

22 MR. DAVID MOELLER: Good morning, or
23 almost good afternoon. My name is David Moeller,
24 I'm an attorney at Minnesota Power in Duluth,
25 Minnesota.

1 With me are other people from Minnesota
2 Power and HDR, who is our consultant on this
3 project, including Jim Atkinson, who is sitting over
4 there in the yellow, he probably is the person
5 you've talked to the most about this project, he's
6 our routing and siting lead for the Great Northern
7 Transmission Line.

8 First, as Julie said, we'd also like to
9 thank you for coming out today and participating in
10 this project. It's an important project for
11 Minnesota Power, we see it as not just a
12 transmission line, but a project that will transform
13 our energy supply as we develop this line and
14 develop the hydro energy in Manitoba that comes into
15 the states.

16 As I said, it is part of a larger plan.
17 Minnesota Power historically has been a coal-based
18 facility. When I started at the company in 2005 we
19 were about 95 percent coal. Today, thanks to
20 renewable additions we've made out in North Dakota
21 and other places, we're at about 20 percent
22 renewable, 80 percent coal. And our goal long term
23 is to get to a third, a third, a third, meaning a
24 third coal, a third renewables, which includes hydro
25 from Manitoba Hydro, and a third natural gas

1 purchases. So we're getting there, responding to
2 what's happening at the national level, but also
3 meeting state requirements for meeting more
4 renewable energy.

5 Besides meeting those needs of diversity,
6 which is the first part up there, it also helps the
7 region, not just Minnesota Power, by developing
8 additional resources that can be used by other
9 utilities and other customers in the area.

10 We also see a need for increasing demand,
11 particularly on the Iron Range here in Minnesota,
12 with the new mining companies coming in, we want to
13 serve those customers and serve the need, both the
14 generation and the capacity energy resource.

15 And then we also see the transmission
16 line providing additional reliability for the region
17 and for Minnesota Power customers. Minnesota Power
18 doesn't serve Littlefork, but we do serve I Falls,
19 we serve Duluth, we serve the Iron Range, so we are
20 a utility in the region. But we have needs to make
21 sure our customers have reliability, and another
22 transmission line between Manitoba and Minnesota
23 will increase that reliability for the entire
24 region.

25 As we developed this project, we went

1 through various steps to get to where we are today
2 with having a proposal before the Minnesota Public
3 Utilities Commission, an application in to the
4 Department of Energy.

5 We started by charting what is the
6 critical path for how to get there, what steps do we
7 need to do to develop this project. Second, we
8 revealed where are the fatal flaws, where can't we
9 go, what are other spots we're not allowed to go,
10 where we shouldn't go, and I'll talk about that in a
11 second as well. And we defined what our study area
12 is, you know, to get from Manitoba to Minnesota
13 Power service territory, what is the broadest
14 possible area that we can go to and look at those
15 areas and look at those opportunities.

16 And then we engaged stakeholders multiple
17 times, which we'll show in a few seconds, a chart of
18 different open houses, including coming to
19 Littlefork here multiple times, as well as engaging
20 agencies and getting their input, from both federal
21 and state agencies. And then determining the range
22 of alternatives, so how can we do this, how can we
23 get the transmission line from the border to
24 ultimately we landed in Blackberry, the Blackberry
25 Substation, which is near Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

1 And then we applied for permits. On April 15th,
2 2014, we applied for both the state route permit as
3 well as the federal presidential permit.

4 As we were developing these range of
5 alternatives we had to look at different options and
6 different -- both opportunities and constraints.
7 And I apologize, this is very small print, but it's
8 more to convey the message that as we were looking
9 through the different alternatives, there's some
10 opportunities, as Tracy mentioned, following the
11 state policy of existing corridors where possible,
12 other places where it makes sense to route
13 transmission lines. But there are also many
14 constraints to limit the impacts on the environment
15 and limit the impact on homeowners and landowners,
16 and then other features that are constraints that we
17 find difficult or not good places to route
18 transmission lines.

19 So as we were developing these
20 alternatives we came and started stakeholder
21 outreach, as I mentioned. As you can see,
22 Littlefork is on every single one of these maps or
23 every single one of these sessions, open house
24 rounds that we did. And as we kept doing more and
25 more studying we would narrow the alternatives by

1 taking your input, taking the input of agencies, to
2 figure out where corridors are and getting down to
3 even more specific corridors and then ultimately to
4 route alternatives. And then, especially in this
5 area near the border crossing, near Roseau, we did
6 an additional round of meetings to narrow those
7 alternatives even more. In this case, what I call a
8 bypass, to make it even straighter and even limit
9 the impacts more so on homeowners in this area.

10 And that's when we came up with preferred
11 and alternative routes. Our preferred route is the
12 blue route and our alternative is the orange route.
13 There are additional segments that are not on this
14 map that we proposed, but we still prefer the blue
15 route without the additional segments.

16 And as we went through the process, the
17 area keeps getting narrower and narrower, starting
18 with the study area of over 19,000 square miles,
19 going down to route options and route alternatives.
20 And then ultimately when we build the project, the
21 right-of-way that we will have to acquire right now
22 for 220 miles of transmission line, there would be a
23 200-foot right-of-way along the line, which would
24 equal about eight square miles we would have to
25 acquire and use for the transmission line.

1 This is a brief summary of all the
2 different open houses and other ways we've received
3 input from the public and agencies, you know,
4 comments and online comments from an open house that
5 we did. As well as in February we started the CN
6 process, having scoping meetings for the
7 environmental report for the CN. The closest thing
8 we had to here was in I Falls, we didn't have one in
9 Littlefork, just the way the meetings were spread
10 out, but we did receive input on that. And then
11 Bill Storm will talk about what he's doing for the
12 environmental report for the CN as well.

13 Then my last slide, besides the route
14 permit and the presidential permit, we have other
15 major permits that we'll have to obtain.

16 The certificate of need that Tracy
17 mentioned earlier, where the Public Utilities
18 Commission has to determine there's a need for the
19 project.

20 The section 404 permit under the Clean
21 Water Act is from the Army Corps of Engineers
22 because there's impacts to wetlands. So we're in
23 the process of putting that application together.

24 We also need a crossing license or
25 crossing state land license from the Minnesota

1 Department of Natural Resources. Because a lot of
2 this project crosses state land we'll need a license
3 from the DNR for that.

4 So, once again, thank you for coming
5 today. We look forward to hearing your comments and
6 appreciate your attention today and throughout all
7 the different open houses and other processes that
8 Minnesota Power has put in place to get input from
9 you.

10 MR. BILL STORM: Thanks, Dave.

11 Again, I'd like to thank you all for
12 coming out, as everybody else did. The process
13 doesn't work without people participating.

14 My name is Bill Storm, I'm from the
15 Department of Commerce. While the PUC are the
16 decision-makers in this process, and their decision
17 for this process, when they get to the end, will be,
18 one, is the environmental impact statement adequate,
19 does it address everything that was in scope and
20 does it address it adequately. Two, should a route
21 permit be granted to Minnesota Power, where should
22 that route go, what should be the route that it
23 should go, and what conditions should be attached to
24 that permit. So the Public Utilities Commission has
25 that final say.

1 What the Department of Commerce does is
2 we do the environmental review. And that -- in this
3 case, the environmental review for us begins with a
4 scoping meeting. And Tracy went over the schedule
5 and so did Julie, so real quickly, we're just at the
6 public scoping meetings point. You can see there's
7 many steps in this process, ending with the final
8 decision, and there are starred points that show
9 where the public can participate in the process.

10 In Minnesota, for a large energy project
11 such as this, there are two environmental review
12 processes that can take place, the alternative
13 process or the full process. This route, because of
14 its size, both in length and in voltage, must go
15 under the full process. And the full process is
16 approximately a 12-month process, plus three months
17 that can be added on the end. But the process
18 includes a public scoping meeting and comment
19 period, and that's what we're here to do tonight, is
20 to get some input from the public. A scoping
21 decision, and what I mean by a scoping decision is a
22 document that shows what will be in the
23 environmental impact statement. And the scoping
24 decision is made by the commissioner of the
25 Department of Commerce, my ultimate boss, I guess.

1 And you can think of the scoping decision as a table
2 of contents. It'll list out the issues and the
3 areas and the alternatives that will be evaluated in
4 the environmental document.

5 And then you have the environmental
6 document, it comes out in draft first, the draft
7 environmental impact statement. When that document
8 comes out, as Julie said, there is a meeting up
9 here, another road show like we're doing this time,
10 where you get to comment then on the draft EIS. And
11 you may comment on the draft EIS in many different
12 ways or many different tones. You may comment that,
13 Bill, you missed an issue that I asked you to
14 incorporate that made it in the scope but you didn't
15 discuss it in the EIS so you failed there, it's not
16 adequate. Or, Bill, you did cover the issue I
17 wanted you to cover, but I don't necessarily agree
18 with the way you covered it, I think it needs to be
19 fleshed out more. Or you may make a comment about
20 something that wasn't in scope, you know.

21 Our responses to that is the final
22 environmental impact statement. The final
23 environmental statement is the draft environmental
24 statement with another volume attached to it that
25 lists everybody's comments, and then our response to

1 that comment and DOE's response to that comment.
2 And, as I said, the response may be, wow, that's a
3 very good point made up with new information, please
4 go back and see section 2 and it was rewritten, and
5 that section 2 would be striked out and underlined
6 and bolded so you can see what was changed in the
7 draft document to make it a final document.

8 So the final EIS is basically the draft
9 EIS, your responses, and our responses and our
10 revisions to the draft EIS as a result of your
11 comments. Once we have all those comments, we get
12 the final in, we can move on to the other process.

13 I lost my place.

14 Okay. The scoping of the environmental
15 document. The purpose of the scoping document and
16 the comment period. I'm here to provide an
17 opportunity for the public to learn about the
18 project and also to take input on the project.

19 The way I want the public to do that is
20 by suggesting alternative routes and suggesting
21 specific concerns or impacts that you may have that
22 you want to make sure I address in the environmental
23 impact statement.

24 We do have the GIS station set up here if
25 you need help in figuring out alternative routes,

1 suggestions you want to put on the table, and you
2 certainly can make comments on the issues and
3 concerns that you have for the record that we will
4 consider in the environmental report.

5 The scoping decision for the
6 environmental report must identify the alternative
7 routes to be addressed in the EIS, the specific
8 impacts to be addressed in the EIS, and also a
9 schedule for the completion of the EIS. So that's
10 what will be in the scoping decision.

11 A general definition of the environmental
12 impact statement, although Jules gave an adequate
13 one, when we at the state are looking at an
14 environmental impact statement, we are looking at a
15 written document that describes the human and
16 environmental impacts of the transmission line and
17 any selected alternative routes that you may put on
18 the table or that may come up through the process,
19 and methods to mitigate those impacts.

20 Now, as I said, the main reason I'm here
21 tonight is to solicit what the local citizens feel
22 should be covered in my environmental impact
23 statement. And there are two areas. One is impacts
24 and one is alternatives. And if you looked when you
25 came in, on the table, I made a draft scoping

1 document that I put out. This draft scoping
2 document sort of explains what environmental review
3 is to you and explains what I think should be in the
4 environmental impact statement.

5 If you turn to page 5 and 6 of this
6 document, you can see something that looks like a
7 table of contents. That's basically the scope of
8 the environmental document, of the EIS. And as you
9 see on this generic scope, the categories are very
10 broad. And what I'm asking the local citizens to do
11 is bring forth your knowledge or your concerns to me
12 to make sure that I cover these issues. An example
13 would be, if you look in this table of contents you
14 can see that these are broad categories. 5.13,
15 natural environment, flora. That's a pretty broad
16 category. Flora, plants, okay. But you may have
17 local knowledge of a plant that you know, that
18 you're concerned about, a plant of special concern
19 or just a plant that you like and you're concerned
20 about its welfare and it's within the route, and you
21 may want to make sure I consider what is going to be
22 the impact to that species of that plant. And in
23 this case you would say, Bill, I want to make sure
24 that you cover the Lapland buttercup. I know in
25 quarter section whatever, whatever, where the route

1 goes through, I know there's a stand of that there
2 and I'm concerned that this transmission line will
3 impact that. What I want to hear from you is, Bill,
4 cover that, discuss that, flesh it out in the
5 environmental impact statement.

6 The next item is a little bit more
7 difficult. This is where I'm asking you to give me
8 alternatives to the proposed routes. And these are
9 usually alternative segments. You may have a
10 concern, when you look at the route and you look at
11 how it crosses your property or crosses your area,
12 and you may have a concern that lies within that
13 3,000-foot route. And you may believe that the
14 flexibility in putting that alignment, that 200-foot
15 easement that they want within that 3,000 feet,
16 that's not enough flexibility to avoid or mitigate
17 my concern. I think this route is going to impact
18 whatever my concern is, say a stand of old cedar
19 trees or a deer wintering area that you know of that
20 you're a little bit concerned about. And you think
21 the only way to mitigate that, to lessen that
22 impact, is to go around that. And that's what the
23 whole point of seeking alternative route segments
24 is. I'm asking you to, if you have that issue and
25 you think the appropriate way to mitigate that issue

1 is to avoid it, I want you to give me a route
2 alternative that would avoid that so I can carry
3 that through and evaluate it in the environmental
4 impact statement.

5 Now, the bar for that is set kind of high
6 in the statutes and the rules. If you want to put
7 an alternative route on the table, you must do two
8 things. One, you must explain why you want this
9 route to be included in the EIS evaluation. And
10 what that boils down to is what are you trying to
11 mitigate. Is there a unique feature, either a
12 historical, archaeological, environmental, human
13 settlement, that you want to mitigate, and you think
14 the only way to mitigate that is to change the
15 route, move the route, then you also have to provide
16 me all your supporting information that you want me
17 to cover. All the things that you want me to
18 consider. Why is this important, why does this
19 warrant being included in the scope of the document
20 and then being evaluated in the document. So I
21 wanted to help you go over that. I want to go
22 through some examples.

23 Okay. To sort of help you get over that,
24 to understand where that bar is at and what kind of
25 information I'll be looking for and what examples

1 I've done in the past, I just wanted to run through
2 some examples.

3 This is a transmission line, a 115 kV
4 line that was proposed to go from Tower to
5 Embarrass. The original proposal, just like you see
6 MP come in with an application and they have their
7 route, their proposed route on it, this particular
8 utility came in and they had a proposed route that
9 went up the east side of, I think that's 135 there.
10 We had scoping meetings just like I'm having now and
11 there were a group of individual landowners that
12 lived right here that had property set back from the
13 road, on the east side of the road. So this
14 transmission line would run between their house and
15 135. And they were concerned about that, and they
16 knew that there was a huge tract of land just to the
17 east of them that was all tax forfeited. So they
18 asked me, Bill, would you consider evaluating a
19 route that goes behind our property and goes through
20 that public land, through that tax-forfeited land.
21 Their rationale being we think it's better to use
22 public property when it's available rather than
23 private property. That made sense to me and I
24 recommended that that go into the scope of the
25 environmental document, it did go in the scope of

1 the environmental document, and when the process ran
2 its course, the environmental document being
3 released, the public hearing, and the final decision
4 at the Commission, the Commission did grant a route
5 permit and did require the applicant to go through
6 that public property there on this instance.

7 Another example would be -- this is
8 another transmission line, this is a rebuild line.
9 Where the purple line is, this is going through
10 Chaska, there was a 69 kV line, sort of a small
11 line, 69 kV lines are almost distribution lines,
12 they are small lines that go through there. Well,
13 the utility wanted to upgrade that to a 115 kV line,
14 so a bigger line, bigger pole, a little bit more
15 wider right-of-way. And there was a group of
16 citizens who were concerned about a property that
17 was right here that was historical property, it was
18 on the historical register, historical property.
19 They felt that the taller poles and the wider
20 easement would negatively affect this property.

21 So they came -- during the scoping
22 meeting they came to me and they said, Bill, this is
23 our concern, can we offer you two suggestions or two
24 alternatives to consider in your environmental
25 document that will mitigate this concern of ours.

1 And they suggested, you can see the light line here,
2 that's the route. That's what the utility was
3 requesting. That's where we talked about the route
4 is wide. The right-of-way that they want, since
5 it's a rebuild, they wanted to go right down the
6 same right-of-way, that small 75-feet, 100-feet
7 right-of-way.

8 The citizens asked me to look at an
9 alternative route segment, this is an alternative
10 route that came out of the proposed route, so left
11 the proposed route and went back and then joined
12 back up there avoiding this historical property.
13 They also said, well, in addition to studying that,
14 Bill, would you study an alignment modification,
15 staying within the route but just pushing the line
16 on the other side of the road.

17 Through scoping, this made sense to me.
18 They're concerned about impact on the historic
19 property, we haven't fleshed that out yet, we don't
20 know all the information about that. So I
21 recommended that that go into the scoping decision.
22 It made it into the scoping decision and it was
23 evaluated in the environmental document. Now, the
24 environmental document was released, we had a public
25 hearing, and at the end the Commission, evaluating

1 the whole record, the environmental impact statement
2 just being a portion of it, they granted a permit
3 for the rebuild right where the utility wanted.
4 They didn't think that the impact to the historical
5 property was significant enough to grant an
6 alternative route segment in this case.

7 Another example. This is near Floodwood,
8 I do believe. A transmission line, a 115 in the
9 blue, and the blue, the lower one there, a 115 kV
10 line proposed to travel along the south side of this
11 county road. This goes on for quite a ways, so it
12 goes on, so it's a little bit more significant than
13 this makes it look, but there were a bunch of
14 private landowners here with homes near the road
15 here, those people, when we went to scoping, came to
16 me and said, Bill, you know, we got landowners all
17 along the south side of the road, but the north side
18 of the road, that's all corporate land, that's paper
19 land, that's land that the paper company owns,
20 nobody lives on that. Can we give you an
21 alternative route for you to consider the impacts of
22 moving that line to the north side of that road.
23 Again, this was a private versus corporate land
24 issue.

25 It made sense for me, so I recommended to

1 the scope, in the scope, it made it in the scope,
2 and then it was studied in the environmental report.
3 The environmental report came out, we had the public
4 hearing. The final decision, the Commission did
5 think that that was a rational thing to do and they
6 granted the permit for the transmission line to
7 travel along the north side of that road to
8 accommodate those people's concern.

9 Another example. This might be near
10 Floodwood also. This is another 115 kV line, it was
11 a rebuild coming up along the west side of this
12 county road. And there was a property owner here
13 who had a memorial site just outside the
14 right-of-way of the existing 69 kV line. Now, the
15 utility wanted to upgrade this line to a 115, which
16 would widen the right-of-way a little bit, a little
17 taller poles. And these people were concerned that
18 it may impact their memorial, you know. They came
19 to me during scoping with that.

20 That made sense to me to include it in
21 the scope so it could be evaluated in the EIS. We
22 did that. It made it in the scope, we evaluated it
23 in the environmental document, went through a public
24 hearing. And at the end, the Commission, when they
25 looked at all the information about where the

1 memorial was, how many feet it was going to be away
2 from the new right-of-way, and we did some photo
3 renditions to what it would look like. The
4 Commission felt that the impact wasn't significant
5 enough to the memorial to warrant that alternative
6 and so they permitted the line on the west side of
7 the road the way the utility had requested.

8 Another example. I think this is the
9 last one. Just trying to give you an idea of what
10 this proposing alternatives is all about, and that
11 it has to be -- it can't be, I don't want it on my
12 property just because I don't want it on my
13 property, put it on Joe's property. You're not
14 mitigating the concern there. You have to be
15 mitigating the concern.

16 In this case there was an existing 69
17 line that came down here to the south and there was
18 also a County Road 33, 34, that came along here.
19 Somewhere along the history, the county moved the
20 road north. They didn't move the transmission line,
21 it's not theirs, but they realigned that county road
22 and they moved it north.

23 Well, years later the utility comes
24 around and they want to upgrade this 69 line to a
25 115. The landowners along here came to me and said,

1 well, Bill, if they're going to do that and this
2 county road has been realigned, why don't we realign
3 the new transmission line, the 115, with that road
4 so it's back to the right-of-way of the road.

5 Again, that made sense to me, again I
6 recommended it be included in scope, it was included
7 in the scope. The environmental document evaluated
8 its impacts, we went to the public hearing, and in
9 the end the Commission did agree that moving that
10 transmission line to the right-of-way of the road to
11 realign those two things made sense and that's the
12 decision they made in the permit.

13 So that's -- I always feel that the
14 public struggles with how do I come up with a
15 proposal, how do I do this. And this was just to
16 give you an idea of this is what I'm looking for,
17 this is -- you need to have an issue that you're
18 mitigating and then you need to provide me the
19 supporting information of how you're going to do
20 that.

21 And, again, we do have two GIS stations
22 set up here, so that if you have that in mind now,
23 you can, after we break here after questions, you
24 can work with the GIS guys and they can help you
25 look at your area, pull it in from an aerial

1 photograph, help you design an alternative route
2 concept, print it out with your comments on it, and
3 that can be submitted in the record and I will
4 consider whether that should be included in the
5 scope or not. So that's why I went through all
6 those slides in that area.

7 So another point I want to make to you is
8 that I don't work in isolation. When we do an
9 environmental impact statement or an environmental
10 assessment or an environmental report, these various
11 environmental documents that we have to generate
12 associated with these energy projects, I work with
13 the downstream agencies that are also going to be
14 involved. The DNR, the Department of
15 Transportation, the Pollution Control Agency, any
16 agency that may have downstream permitting
17 authority.

18 As you saw on Dave's slide, they may have
19 to get a public lands crossing permit from the DNR.
20 They may have to get a road crossing permit from
21 Department of Transportation. These agencies are
22 required by statute to participate with me in
23 developing not only the scope but the environmental
24 document as we move forward. And that's just a
25 graphic that shows the various agencies that are

1 involved. Downstream permits, Dave covered that.

2 Our information. The Department of
3 Commerce maintains a website where we also maintain
4 the documents that will be generated during this
5 process. You can find the documents on that
6 website. So you have multiple choices of where to
7 find information on this project. You can go to the
8 Department of Commerce's website, which will have
9 all the public comments I receive, all the agency
10 comments I receive, the scoping decision, my
11 recommendation on the scoping decision, all that
12 stuff will be put on our website.

13 That stuff will also show up on the
14 Department of Commerce's eDockets, or Public
15 Utilities Commission eDockets website. And because
16 we are doing a joint environmental impact statement
17 on this case, the Department of Commerce and the
18 DOE, Department of Energy, have established a
19 website, too, where we're going to post information.

20 But the important part is I'm here to
21 seek this input on what you want me to cover in the
22 environmental report. Your comments need to be
23 submitted to me or to Julie by August 15. Our
24 deadlines are a little different. You'll notice
25 that Julie's deadline for the feds was August 12th,

1 The first person on my list is William
2 Gray.

3 MR. RYAN REED: Bill, can I interrupt
4 just for a second. Just in case anybody has any
5 questions of the DNR, I'm here to represent DNR. My
6 name is Ryan Reed, I'm out of Grand Rapids, and I
7 coordinate the environmental review that the DNR is
8 participating in. So that's it.

9 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you.

10 Like I said, I don't do this in
11 isolation. The DNR, the DOT, the Department of
12 Health, the Pollution Control Agency, they all have
13 input in this process for me.

14 Okay. William Gray.

15 MR. WILLIAM GRAY: William Gray,
16 W-I-L-L-I-A-M, G-R-A-Y.

17 I want to address the alternate route
18 south of Littlefork that used to be in
19 consideration.

20 I have a private airport that I've had
21 since 1968 there and still operate. I'm a flight
22 instructor, mechanic, inspector. I've done flight
23 training out of it. One of my students is here
24 today and will be talking to you.

25 Jim is pointing at it right there.

1 It -- if the line should ultimately
2 determine to be there, that would be right in the
3 landing pattern of my airport and -- which would be
4 a God-awful safety hazard.

5 I have reasonable amount of traffic in
6 there in the summertime, students, ex-students come
7 in to visit me, it's just a fun thing to have. I've
8 rebuilt planes. It's still very active. And I have
9 two planes myself placed there now. My son has a
10 plane in there right now for maintenance.

11 And I would hope that you would not put
12 that back in the mix and end up putting it there.
13 In addition to me, there are a lot of congestion of
14 hunting cabins, if you will, that are along that old
15 railroad grade that runs all the way from Littlefork
16 to Deer River. And you're missing them, also.

17 And I have no problem with the blue
18 route, the blue route I think is great, it's far
19 enough away from me and I think it should be okay.

20 It would be a really, really big issue
21 for me if somehow they changed the blue route back
22 into that alternative south of Littlefork.

23 Thank you.

24 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. William, what I
25 can say to your comment is when we do the EIS, and

1 the EIS will evaluate the impacts to the human and
2 the natural environment for both the orange, the
3 blue, and these alternatives on there. So your
4 airport and the potential impact to your airport
5 will be noted on that environmental impact statement
6 for that -- is that C-2 or 1, one of them, the
7 route. So the information will be captured in the
8 environmental document.

9 I would also recommend that when we're
10 back up here for the hearing with the ALJ that you
11 reiterate your concern to the ALJ, and you show your
12 support for one of the alternative routes that
13 doesn't directly impact your airport.

14 Do you have anything you want to add,
15 Jim?

16 MR. JIM ATKINSON: I just want to add to
17 Bill's comments that the blue route, if you compared
18 from coming through, it's about 13.2 miles shorter
19 as well, and it affects really zero seasonal or
20 permanent residences, where the alternate route
21 segment that he wants us to not use affects several.
22 So in fairly close proximity to several homes and
23 cabins.

24 MR. WILLIAM GRAY: Also, Bill, that's not
25 a designated state airport, it's a private strip.

1 MR. BILL STORM: I realize that. And we
2 are aware that we have several of them to make sure
3 that we, you know, my job is to make sure that the
4 environmental impact statement lays out all the
5 information, lays out the landscape for the
6 Commission so they have all the information.

7 Robert Oveson.

8 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay.

9 MR. BILL STORM: Please state and spell
10 your name.

11 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Sure. Robert Oveson,
12 O-V, as in Victor, E-S-O-N. And, gosh, I'd like to
13 start with a couple of questions. And the first one
14 might go to DNR folks, but it could possibly be
15 answered by Minnesota Power as well.

16 Is there anything you can share with me
17 regarding the position or any information from the
18 DNR on how they might affect this process? Have
19 they weighed in in any way at all yet?

20 MR. BILL STORM: I can tell you from the
21 DOC standpoint, when an application comes in to the
22 Commission, we at the DOC make sure that the
23 downstream agencies, the DNR, the PCA, the DOT, they
24 get a copy of the application and they get an
25 invitation to participate in the process.

1 They are currently working on assembling
2 comments. They've reviewed the document and they
3 are assembling comments to submit during the scoping
4 process. And they will do that. They will submit
5 comments with their concerns in their areas of
6 interest for the routes and the route alternatives.
7 That's not where their participation stops, though.
8 They also will comment on the draft environmental
9 impact statement and I anticipate that they will
10 also comment during the public hearing to express
11 their interest, but I'll let the DNR speak to that,
12 if you'd like.

13 MR. RYAN REED: Sure. Well, we
14 participated quite some time ago during the early
15 coordination phase, we call it, and with Jim and
16 other folks at Minnesota Power. I don't know, was
17 that like two years ago, maybe?

18 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Yeah, we've been at it
19 for a couple years.

20 MR. RYAN REED: So we've basically
21 highlighted areas of concern that the DNR would
22 have. These might be certain types of lands that
23 we're concerned about, rare species, things that the
24 DNR -- you know, information that they need to know
25 when they're looking for routes. Streams, other,

1 you know, natural features that they would have to
2 cross, and any of the potential ramifications or
3 what process they would have to go through to either
4 go around or go through those properties or those
5 resources. So, yeah, there has been a fair amount
6 of communication, you know, throughout already.

7 MR. BILL STORM: And I might add that now
8 that the -- like he said, a lot of upfront work was
9 done, coordinating between the applicant and the
10 downstream permitting agencies. Now that the
11 official process has started, as the comments come
12 in, once the comment period is over, I know I will
13 get comments from Jamie Schrenzel -- that's sort of
14 the DNR coordinator down in St. Paul and she
15 coordinates all the comments for the district
16 offices -- I know she'll be putting comments into
17 the record and you'll be able to see them, they will
18 be on the various websites.

19 MR. RYAN REED: I don't know, Jim, do you
20 have any more to add to that?

21 MR. JIM ATKINSON: I guess to say that
22 DNR always has a position on these things and they
23 will certainly make it known.

24 The other thing is that maybe just to
25 speak a little bit to the diversity of interests

1 that the DNR has, everything from looking out for
2 the mining industry to concern for endangered
3 species. So it's a lot of different things that get
4 funneled into one big, probably many pages long,
5 comment at the end.

6 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay. And maybe I'll
7 try to ask my question more directly. Is the DNR at
8 this time planning any changes to the blue or orange
9 route?

10 MR. RYAN REED: Not that I'm aware of.
11 But we vet that through the different divisions
12 within DNR. We have asked for different route
13 configurations in the past for resource reviews, so
14 Minnesota Power has provided that back to us. I'm
15 not sure yet if we'll continue to ask for additional
16 routes, but we need to vet that to forestry, we've
17 got minerals, we've got wildlife, we've got waters,
18 so we have all these divisions that have to weigh in
19 yet, and we'll wait throughout the comment period
20 before we make that decision in August.

21 MR. BILL STORM: I can certainly say for
22 past cases that I've dealt with, past transmission
23 lines, the DNR has definitely been active, they
24 definitely participate in scoping, as well as
25 participating upfront when the application comes in.

1 And I have had the DNR recommend comments, they can
2 recommend comments on minor adjustments within a
3 route. We've certainly had that, we've had people
4 come in with a 1,000-foot route or a 2,000-foot
5 route and an anticipated alignment, and there being
6 -- not within the whole route, but within a portion
7 of that anticipated alignment -- a DNR issue, a DNR
8 concern.

9 The one I can think of is a deer
10 wintering area. And what we did or what the
11 Commission did after our recommendation was in the
12 permit, they issued the permit for the route, but
13 for that section or quarter of land that the DNR was
14 concerned about, they required as a permit condition
15 that that alignment be shifted as far east in that
16 route as possible to avoid that deer wintering area.

17 So those sort of things do happen with
18 input from DNR.

19 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Yeah, and also common
20 is, in some circumstances, certain types of
21 mitigation that might be in the DNR's comments as
22 well.

23 MR. BILL STORM: For sure. We get --
24 there is some standard comments that we get from the
25 DNR that are what we would call best management

1 practices comments that help mitigate the impacts of
2 construction. One would be the use of
3 biodegradeable mesh netting when they are doing the
4 erosion control so it breaks down so things aren't
5 caught in it. They may ask for a biological survey
6 along certain segments of the route if they're
7 concerned that the habitat is favorable for some
8 species they're concerned about. They may recommend
9 through us to the Commission that a permit condition
10 be ahead of construction do a plant survey in this
11 area because they're concerned about a certain
12 plant. So those things do happen.

13 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay. And I think it
14 would be -- I hope it's understandable that for an
15 affected landowner, the DNR kind of represents the
16 wild card. You know, the thought being that they
17 might have a fair bit of sway in determining a
18 route. And the earlier we know about, you know,
19 where the DNR might affect the route, the better.
20 Because that seems like it could kind of reset the
21 whole process if we -- if late information came in
22 on a route and it changed the route.

23 MR. RYAN REED: I think some of the fatal
24 flaws with a lot of the layers of information that
25 we've provided, or Dave accessed, to try to avoid

1 those types of places where, you know, it's a poor
2 choice because of, you know, this or that, or a
3 statute that don't allow crossing certain areas.

4 Now we're probably getting into more of
5 a, you know, I'd rather have you go here because
6 it's, you know, like Bill mentioned, a deer
7 wintering area or maybe some waterfowl protection
8 area. You know, something that we feel -- or a
9 forestry resource, that we feel that it's, you know,
10 it would be better if you went here instead of the
11 existing alignment. And Bill I think went through
12 that already, I think there's, you know, it might be
13 a better choice.

14 But I think you have equal standing on,
15 you know, if you got property, if you have a concern
16 and you have good reason not to suggest an
17 alternative route, you know, a pretty good standing
18 as well as the DNR does on those kind of issues.

19 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay.

20 MR. BILL STORM: You can certainly -- as
21 he said, you have the same standing. You can put
22 some alternatives on the table. If you have, like I
23 say, if you had a concern or something unique about
24 a piece of property that you're interested in,
25 whether you own the property or not that the route

1 goes through, this is your opportunity to give me
2 alternatives.

3 If you don't think your issue or concern
4 could be mitigated by moving the alignment within
5 that route or by best management practices, you
6 know, building in the winter or other stuff. If you
7 think, well, geez, the only way I can think of to
8 avoid the impact of what I'm concerned is you have
9 to go outside the proposed route. You have the
10 option of putting that on the table, you know.

11 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay.

12 MR. BILL STORM: It is certainly -- this
13 whole process, my role in this whole process is to
14 lay out all the facts because there are competing
15 interests, you know. And the way I view my job is I
16 want everybody -- every competing interest to be
17 laid out factually. So then the Commission, it's
18 the Commission's role to how they're going to weigh
19 those competing interests, you know.

20 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay. Thanks.

21 So my next question I have, maybe Jim,
22 you could help me a little bit. I want to be clear
23 in differentiating between, I think we're calling it
24 the Littlefork bypass.

25 MR. JIM ATKINSON: That's our own

1 internal terminology.

2 MR. ROBERT OVESON: All right. The one
3 that was proposed and followed in 2013, which is
4 different from the blue route.

5 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Correct.

6 MR. ROBERT OVESON: How can I -- can we
7 talk about that as a follow the 2013 route versus
8 the blue route? How can we be clear as we talk
9 about those?

10 MR. JIM ATKINSON: I guess maybe I can
11 just talk about that. In the fall of 2013 we had a
12 route segment that did go -- that did bypass the
13 Littlefork area, but it went in substantially
14 further to the east and the north. And it did that
15 to stay within our original notice area. And then
16 in hindsight it was decided that, you know, if we're
17 going to do that, we could go outside of our notice
18 area, because there really isn't anyone out here and
19 we can do some additional notifications and we can
20 make it even better. So this is probably five to
21 seven miles further to the south and the west than
22 what we originally had as our Littlefork bypass.

23 MR. BILL STORM: And your concern, sir,
24 is the -- don't let me put words in your mouth, I'm
25 just trying to understand. This Littlefork bypass,

1 are you saying that you think that was better than
2 where they ended up now?

3 MR. ROBERT OVESON: I'm saying where we
4 ended up now is better than to follow 2013.

5 MR. BILL STORM: Which was this thing Jim
6 just described?

7 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Yep. And I want to
8 give reasons for that.

9 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. What I'd
10 recommend, there are several steps in this process.
11 The step we're in now is I'm trying to take scoping
12 comments on what issues and concerns people are
13 concerned about and what alternatives you want me to
14 evaluate.

15 Once the draft environmental impact
16 statement is done and the final is almost being
17 written, we'll be back up here for the public
18 hearing. And the public hearing is, what's being
19 solicited from the public is we want to know --
20 we're not worried about scoping and that, what we
21 want to know is how you feel about the whole record.
22 And that to me is the more appropriate spot for
23 someone to say, I prefer this route over this route.
24 Because all the information is then already -- it's
25 on the table at that point and we're in front of the

1 judge, and it seems more appropriate to me that
2 if -- if your concern tonight is I don't want this
3 route coming back on the table --

4 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Yeah, that's it.

5 MR. BILL STORM: That's your concern
6 tonight, you can certainly state it, and you just
7 did, it's in the record now. But that's probably a
8 more appropriate comment to be made at the public
9 hearing. Because when we go to the public hearing
10 the judge is going to be taking comments on
11 everything, on the whole record up to date, and then
12 he's going to be making a report of facts, findings,
13 and recommendations. And your concern will be noted
14 in his report and his findings, you know.

15 I don't think -- unless somebody steps
16 forward through the process during scoping that
17 says, Bill, I think you should study this route.
18 You know, somebody could do that. Somebody could
19 say that, and I might look at it and say, well, they
20 did look at it, let's look at it more. And then
21 this would move forward.

22 But if we come out of scoping with these
23 two routes, these alternatives and maybe a handful
24 of little changes that people have been recommending
25 during these two weeks, but this doesn't make it

1 back on the table, then that's off the table.

2 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay. If it's all
3 right, I'd still like to explore that a bit.

4 MR. BILL STORM: Okay.

5 MR. ROBERT OVESON: So I'm representing
6 the landowners, a group of landowners, as is Joanne
7 Cockrun here, that had objection to that fall 2013
8 route. But we had good communications with Jim
9 Atkinson and the new route, you know, relieves those
10 concerns. So the reason -- that move really was in,
11 you know, shared public land versus private, there's
12 a lot of private land by that fall 2013 route,
13 whereas, I'm not aware -- I won't speak for them, I
14 know there's less or maybe none on the current
15 route.

16 But we also -- so we drafted a letter to
17 the Koochiching County Board. Is it possible that
18 that letter becomes part of what you address as you
19 work on your report? Are we able to connect that?

20 MR. BILL STORM: You can certainly --
21 during the comment period you can certainly submit a
22 comment to me and attach that letter to your comment
23 and say I want that to be in the record, you know.

24 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay.

25 MR. BILL STORM: Whether it'll be --

1 there is a section in the environmental report that
2 requires us to discuss alternatives that were put on
3 the table at some point and then taken off.

4 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay.

5 MR. BILL STORM: So this route, and I'll
6 have to talk to Julie about this, but this route may
7 fall in that category. We may view that, once the
8 comment period closes and if nobody throws this
9 route back on the table, if nobody -- like tomorrow
10 somebody could stand and say, Bill, I remember when
11 they were back here and I actually like this route
12 for whatever reason, could you please carry that
13 route forward. That may be a valid thing for me to
14 do.

15 But let's say that doesn't happen, the
16 rationale and discussion of why this route was at
17 one time considered and rejected, that could be
18 handled in the EIS under that section that requires
19 us to have a discussion -- not a full evaluation,
20 but a discussion of routes that were once considered
21 and no longer considered, why are they no longer
22 considered.

23 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay.

24 MR. BILL STORM: So it could be captured
25 that way.

1 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay. If it's all
2 right, I'll look through my notes a bit here.

3 MR. BILL STORM: Go for it.

4 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Would your report
5 address the Bigfork River Development Plan? Are you
6 aware of that document?

7 MR. BILL STORM: I'm not aware of the
8 Bigfork River Development Plan.

9 MR. ROBERT OVESON: It's available on the
10 Itasca County website. It was, I think, released in
11 1992, it was updated in 2005, the 2005 version.

12 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. And your concern?

13 MR. ROBERT OVESON: The concern --

14 MR. BILL STORM: In the context of this
15 transmission line, what is your concern?

16 MR. ROBERT OVESON: That wherever we
17 cross the Bigfork, we address the concerns of that
18 Bigfork River Development Plan. So that will
19 encourage minimizing harmful scenic -- it addresses
20 the archeology. It addresses different aspects and
21 goals of -- for managing development in the Bigfork
22 River corridor. And it was -- it was -- Minnesota
23 Power was involved in the development of that
24 Bigfork River plan.

25 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. Certainly. In

1 the environmental document, if you're going to make
2 additional comments after tonight, I would encourage
3 you to reference that so that we capture that in the
4 environmental document, so that we're aware of that
5 plan, you know. So that we can talk about that, the
6 route in the context of that plan. Sure, we can do
7 that.

8 DR. JULIE ANN SMITH: And if I may
9 elaborate. If particularly you're talking about
10 actions that would be stemming from that plan in
11 terms of economic development or any of those types
12 of actions, as I mentioned, reasonably foreseeable,
13 so if the plan lays out certain things that are, you
14 know, for the Bigfork River development, it is
15 incumbent on us in that sort of cumulative impacts,
16 indirect impacts, consideration in the environmental
17 review document to look at things like that that
18 you're mentioning.

19 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay. Gosh, I think
20 I've covered what I can here. I can follow up with
21 a website comment.

22 MR. BILL STORM: Like I say, you can
23 certainly submit your comment through the website,
24 e-mail or snail mail them to me or Julie. We are
25 sharing the comments. So if you send a comment to

1 Julie, you don't have to send it to multiple places.
2 If you send it to one of the places -- me, Julie,
3 our website or the fed website -- it'll get
4 captured. So you -- don't worry that you have to
5 send it to everybody. You can if you want, but
6 certainly, in addition to the comments you made
7 tonight, I would encourage you to submit written
8 comments before the comment period.

9 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay. I will have a
10 list of reasons to -- that defer us from going back
11 to that fall of 2013 route, which include, you know,
12 the fact that it paralleled the river and added
13 harmful effects to the river corridor. It affected
14 grave sites in the area. And the fact that there's
15 a lot of bicyclists, canoeists that use that portion
16 of the river, so we want to minimize effects on the
17 river, is what my comments will cover.

18 MR. BILL STORM: And, like I said, we
19 will certainly cover that Bigfork, whatever we're
20 calling it, the Bigfork option. If no one throws it
21 back on the table during the scoping period, it will
22 certainly be covered as a route alternative that was
23 considered and rejected and then we'll have all the
24 details of why. If somebody throws it back on the
25 table, and I haven't heard anything like that, but

1 if somebody throws it back on the table and I read
2 their rationale and it makes sense to me and we do
3 put it in scope, then it will be in play again and
4 will be fully evaluated in the EIS and then it would
5 be subject to comment during the public hearing.

6 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay.

7 MR. BILL STORM: But at this point it's
8 not on the table, so.

9 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay.

10 MR. BILL STORM: Anything you want to
11 add, Jim?

12 MR. JIM ATKINSON: Just that we avoided
13 putting that into the route permit because we found
14 this to be far superior, in particular the crossing
15 of the river was much better at that point.

16 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Okay, good. Thanks.

17 MR. BILL STORM: Is that it?

18 MR. ROBERT OVESON: Yes, it is.

19 MR. BILL STORM: Well, thank you very
20 much.

21 Byron Fiedler.

22 MR. BYRON FIEDLER: Fiedler,
23 F-I-E-D-L-E-R, Byron. And, first of all, I'd like
24 to say I support either the blue or the yellow
25 routes. However, as a pilot, I will utilize the

1 Bill Gray airstrip, and I am concerned about the
2 safety of flight if the southern route from
3 Littlefork is somehow determined to be an acceptable
4 route.

5 MR. BILL STORM: Just for my
6 clarification, is that this section of the blue
7 route again?

8 MR. BYRON FIEDLER: No, this one that
9 goes straight from Littlefork.

10 MR. JIM ATKINSON: No. Straight
11 north-south.

12 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. Got it. Thank
13 you.

14 MR. BYRON FIEDLER: Thank you.

15 MR. BILL STORM: And that alternative, I
16 can't remember if it's C-1 or C-2, that will be
17 discussed in the -- that will be evaluated in the
18 environmental impact statement, and the presence of
19 that airport will be noted and the potential impacts
20 to it would be fleshed out and discussed.

21 MR. BYRON FIEDLER: Okay. Thank you.

22 MR. BILL STORM: Mike Hanson.

23 MR. MIKE HANSON: My name is Mike Hanson,
24 I'm with Northstar Electric.

25 MR. BILL STORM: Spell your name, please?

1 MR. MIKE HANSON: I'm sorry?

2 MR. BILL STORM: Spell your name?

3 MR. MIKE HANSON: H-A-N-S-O-N.

4 I just have some real cursory questions
5 here and a comment prior to that, and that's
6 Mr. Atkinson, I've had the opportunity to chat with
7 him not only over the phone, but by e-mail, and he
8 has been very forthcoming and helpful and I would
9 like to have that part of the record.

10 My questions are easy. Are local zoning
11 permits needed? I'm curious about if hydro is
12 considered renewable in Minnesota? And I'm
13 wondering, how is Manitoba Hydro, their permitting
14 process going at the same time?

15 MR. DAVID MOELLER: Thanks for your
16 questions.

17 On the first one on the zoning permits,
18 there may be some minor permits here and there for
19 crossings of roads or other things that we might
20 have to get from the county, but the state route
21 permit preempts all local zoning permits, or all
22 local construction zoning permits for the most part.
23 There might be an exception here or there so I won't
24 say it's a blanket statement, but under state
25 statute there's a preemption so the only route or

1 building permit we really need is from the state.

2 On the hydro renewable question, under
3 Minnesota law right now only hydro facilities that
4 are 100 megawatts or less in capacity count towards
5 the Minnesota Renewable Energy Standard. And so
6 Minnesota Power is counting the smaller Manitoba
7 Hydro units under an existing purchase agreement we
8 have towards that, it's not a lot, and most of their
9 units at Manitoba Hydro exceed the 100 megawatt
10 capacity threshold.

11 I will say in Wisconsin they allow new
12 Manitoba Hydro facilities to count towards the
13 Wisconsin Renewable Energy Standard, so if a utility
14 is buying it from Wisconsin and buying it from a new
15 facility then it would count there. But we also see
16 benefits, though, from just from a renewable
17 standpoint and from a noncarbon renewable standpoint
18 moving forward, especially with new regulations.

19 And then the status of Manitoba Hydro's
20 facilities, yesterday we actually started
21 construction on a kiosk type of facility, we dropped
22 the first rock in the river, and so that's a 695
23 megawatt facility, that will be one of the primary
24 ways to serve our Minnesota Power power purchase
25 agreement. And it will be in service in probably

1 2019 or 2020. And they also need to build
2 transmission on their side of the border since we
3 don't want to stop at the border, and they've gone
4 through multiple rounds of open houses in
5 consultation. They haven't filed for the formal
6 permits for their transmission line because their
7 process, or process, as they call it in Canada, is
8 slightly slower and has different -- they do a lot
9 of environmental review internally first and then
10 submit it to their respective government agencies,
11 versus here we file applications and then we go
12 through the steps in coordination with the
13 government agencies. But we still are anticipating
14 starting construction and meeting the 2020
15 in-service date that Minnesota Power has committed
16 to.

17 I will say also that the Province of
18 Manitoba recently issued a report, they call it the
19 N-factor, the need for alternative fuel, that said
20 go ahead with the kiosks and go ahead with the new
21 transmission lines. From a financing and public
22 interest standpoint, we will still need to get all
23 the environmental permits, but we did get that
24 initial approval from the government of Manitoba.

25 MR. MIKE HANSON: So this isn't

1 considered a renewable project in Minnesota because
2 of the size of the project?

3 MR. DAVID MOELLER: Because of the size
4 of the capacity of the generators in Manitoba.

5 MR. MIKE HANSON: Thank you. Thank you,
6 sir.

7 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. I'm through the
8 cards. Anybody else want to speak or want to touch
9 back on something?

10	Sure.
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11 MS. JOANNE COCKRUN: My name is Joanne
12 Cockrun, C-O-C-K-R-U-N.

13 I'd like to know, we talked about natural
14 gas development, how does that project in this area
15 of Minnesota compare dollar-wise or effort-wise with
16 this power line? Anybody know?

17 MR. DAVID MOELLER: I can -- this is
18 David Moeller. I can try to -- I mean, on a high
19 level we're looking at natural gas alternatives to
20 add natural gas to Minnesota Power's system. And
21 that would be considered as part of our resource
22 plan, as part of, if we were going to build in
23 Minnesota, we would need a certificate of need
24 application and a similar process as well.

25 From a cost standpoint, I mean, hydro we

1 think is probably a better deal just because of the
2 renewable aspects of it, the noncarbon aspects of
3 it. The pricing is probably similar, but the type
4 of generation is a little different. Hydro,
5 Manitoba Hydro is what we call baseload generation.
6 It's available around the clock when we need it,
7 especially to serve customers that operate the same
8 way.

9 Gas alternatives are typically more up
10 and down. You build them for when you have peak
11 demands, so you run the generators when you have
12 peak demands. And the pricing on the gas
13 alternative really depends on what the price of
14 natural gas is when you go in the long term.

15 MS. JOANNE COCKRUN: Well, I know what it
16 costs to heat my house with your electric, and I
17 wish I had natural gas. And that's already in this
18 state. I mean, in the long run, you'd be using
19 something that is already here rather than going out
20 of the country to purchase it.

21 MR. DAVID MOELLER: There's not natural
22 gas in the state. We'd have to import it from North
23 Dakota or other places. There's pipelines that come
24 through Minnesota, of course, but the gas itself
25 would come either from -- it might even come from

1 Canada if there's gas being produced up there. But
2 there's not gas resources in the state of Minnesota
3 itself. And there's not coal resources either. So
4 except for wind, which Minnesota Power has done in
5 Minnesota, and some existing hydro, because we were
6 one of the first hydro facilities in the state,
7 there's not a lot of other resources in the state
8 itself.

9 MR. JIM ATKINSON: And not to forget, a
10 big part of our strategy is to not become
11 overdependent on one type of generation.

12 MR. DAVID MOELLER: We think the whole
13 basket, you know, everything or an all above
14 strategy is the best.

15 MS. JOANNE COCKRUN: Okay, thank you.

16 I'd just like to add one other thing,
17 since I live in the Lindford area and my big concern
18 from the beginning is the impact of the river
19 corridors. I know there's some people here that
20 know this county like the back of their hand, but
21 when I look at this map I might as well be looking
22 out of an airplane at 30,000 feet. I can't see any
23 rivers, I can't see where our scenic roads are. For
24 the next public meeting, could we have a map that --

25 MR. BILL STORM: Did you get a copy of

1 the application, by any chance? Did you see the
2 application? Do we have an extra copy of the
3 application here?

4 MS. JOANNE COCKRUN: I know it's
5 available on the computer, but I'm snail mail here.

6 MR. BILL STORM: We can get you a hard
7 copy, I can send you one from my office or --

8 UNIDENTIFIED: We have those maps
9 physically here today for you to look at as well.

10 MS. JOANNE COCKRUN: Okay. Thank you.

11 MR. BILL STORM: But make sure you give
12 me your name and address and I can mail you -- I've
13 got stacks of them in my office, I can mail you one.
14 There's three volumes, and I'll mail you all three.
15 The one that you're -- what was that, Jim?

16 MR. JIM ATKINSON: I said it just about
17 fills a Xerox box.

18 MR. BILL STORM: But the middle volume,
19 which -- Christine, if you can hold it up -- that
20 has very detailed aerial photo maps with USGS maps.
21 You'll be able to find your property and get some
22 good detail from there.

23 MR. JIM ATKINSON: That one doesn't have
24 any notes on it or anything.

25 MS. JOANNE COCKRUN: But, I mean, this

1 map just shows where the river --

2 MR. BILL STORM: Yeah, this is a pretty
3 high scale map. But before you leave tonight, make
4 sure you jot your name and address down on the card,
5 and on Friday afternoon I'll mail it to you. I
6 mean, like I said, it is available on the website,
7 but a lot of people -- me, I need paper in my hand,
8 too, I don't like to look at a screen. So I can
9 send that to her, Jim, when I get back.

10 MR. JIM ATKINSON: We think we probably
11 have one here that we can part with.

12 MS. JOANNE COCKRUN: That's what Rob
13 Oveson said before. Our concern with that proposed
14 route in the fall of 2013 was that if all of a
15 sudden the DNR decides, no, you're not going to do
16 this, that they'll jump back on the other one. And
17 we don't have as strong a voice as the DNR does.

18 MR. JIM ATKINSON: I was going to point
19 out that that went across almost nothing but DNR
20 property as well, so I doubt that that will happen.

21 MR. BILL STORM: And the only thing I
22 would say is that once the comment period is over
23 and me and the DOE digest the comments and we decide
24 what the scope of the document should be of the
25 environmental impact and that scope is released,

1 that scope will identify those alternatives that are
2 still on the table and alive, it'll identify those
3 alternatives that have been considered and rejected.
4 But once we get past that scope, the ability for a
5 route to come back on the table is extremely
6 unlikely.

7 MS. JOANNE COCKRUN: Okay.

8 MR. RYAN REED: Ryan Reed, Minnesota DNR.
9 Just for clarification on how we would comment.

10 The DNR in Minnesota has four regions.
11 This project happens to go through both the
12 northwest and the northeast region. I represent the
13 northeast region, which for the power line here, I
14 believe that's just Koochiching and Itasca Counties.
15 So, you know, to address this gentleman's concern
16 and other concerns about that, you know, I may be
17 speaking just for -- when I speak sometimes just for
18 this region. But there could be other comments in
19 the other region as well that I'm not aware of that
20 could adjust the route maybe, I'm not sure.

21 But just so you know that there's two
22 regions, there will be two regions commenting, but
23 that letter will come together as one letter and
24 that will come out of St. Paul. We'll send our
25 comments to Jamie Schrenzel in St. Paul and then

1 there will be one letter that addresses DNR
2 concerns. So I don't know if that helps.

3 MR. BILL STORM: Thank you very much.

4 Okay. Anyone else?

5 Okay. Like I said, your comments are due
6 August 15th. We have the GIS guys here, use them,
7 even if you just want to use them just to look
8 around and you're not at the point where you want to
9 make alternatives or not, go ahead and use that
10 resource this afternoon while we're here.

11 I appreciate you guys coming out. My
12 contact information is on just about everything
13 that's on those tables. You can call me any time.
14 If you're struggling with a comment or struggling
15 how to approach a comment, or if you want to put an
16 alternative on the table and you're struggling on
17 how to do that, give me a call, I can walk you
18 through that.

19 DR. JULIE ANN SMITH: And I'd just like
20 to mention, my business cards are also available for
21 you on the table with phone numbers, e-mail, and I
22 encourage you to contact me with any questions about
23 what the Department of Energy's role is in the EIS
24 moving forward.

25 MR. BILL STORM: Okay. Again, thanks.

1 It wouldn't work without people showing up, so I
2 really appreciate it. Have a good evening.

3 (Meeting concluded at 12:42 p.m.)
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